

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-47 are cancelled. Claims 48-52 are added. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claims 1-47 (Canceled.)

48. (New.) A variant of a parent *Bacillus stearothermophilus* alpha-amylase, wherein the variant has an amino acid sequence which has at least 95% homology to the parent *Bacillus stearothermophilus* alpha-amylase and comprises a deletion of amino acids 179 and 180, using SEQ ID NO:3 for numbering, and wherein the variant has alpha-amylase activity.

49. (New.) The variant of claim 48, wherein the variant further comprises a substitution of a cysteine at amino acids 349 and 428, using SEQ ID NO:3 for numbering.

50. (New.) A variant alpha-amylase, wherein the variant has at least 95% homology to SEQ ID NO:3 and comprises a deletion of amino acids 179 and 180, using SEQ ID NO:3 for numbering, and wherein the variant has alpha-amylase activity.

51. (New.) The variant of claim 50, wherein the variant further comprises a substitution of a cysteine at amino acids 349 and 428, using SEQ ID NO:3 for numbering.

52. (New.) A variant of a *Bacillus stearothermophilus* alpha-amylase, wherein the alpha-amylase variant consists of a deletion of amino acids 179 and 180, using SEQ ID NO:3 for numbering.